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Viewing cable 09BOGOTA3269, JUAN MANUEL SANTOS DISCUSSES PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTS WITH

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09BOGOTA3269**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09BOGOTA3269	2009-10-27 23:00	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bogota

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/09/1/1355/cable-231676.html>

VZCZCXYZ0005
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #3269/01 3002300
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 272300Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0534
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0126
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0456
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 0482
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 003269

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/10/27

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KJUS](#) [PHUM](#) [CO](#) [EC](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: JUAN MANUEL SANTOS DISCUSSES PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTS WITH
AMBASSADOR

CLASSIFIED BY: William R. Brownfield, Ambassa...

id: 231676
date: 10/27/2009 23:00
refid: 09BOGOTA3269
origin: Embassy Bogota
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination:
header:
VZCZCXYZ0005
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #3269/01 3002300
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 272300Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0534
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
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RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 003269

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SUBJECT: JUAN MANUEL SANTOS DISCUSSES PRESIDENTIAL PROSPECTS WITH
AMBASSADOR

CLASSIFIED BY: William R. Brownfield, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

Summary

¶1. (C) Former Minister of Defense and pre-candidate for President Juan Manuel Santos told Ambassador October 23 he believes President Alvaro Uribe is leaning toward reelection but may fail to fulfill the legal and electoral steps to achieve it. While promoting the third term for Uribe, Santos is positioning himself as Uribe's successor if necessary. He thought his chances good against the remaining field of candidates, though much depends on what alliances are struck among them. Regarding the U.S.-Colombia relationship, Santos said his country needed the United States to stand up against others in South America with a contrary political outlook. End Summary.

Uribe's "Crucible of the Soul"

¶2. (C) At a lunch hosted by Ambassador, former Minister of Defense Santos told the Ambassador that he remains dedicated to promoting President Uribe's third term prospects but will gladly step in as the U Party's presumptive candidate if those efforts are not successful. Santos said he believed Uribe had been tending toward not running for reelection last May when Uribe gave him the go-ahead to resign from the Ministry of Defense so that Santos could run for President. At that time, Santos said he thought Uribe's chances of changing the Constitution were good.

13. (C) That perception was changed, Santos said, by the illegal wiretap scandal at the Administrative Department of Security (DAS) and intimations by the International Criminal Court that it may entertain cases from Colombia when the GOC's reservation to the Treaty of Rome expires in November. Santos perceived that Uribe viewed these events as potential setbacks to his Democratic Security Policy and, as a result, was now more desirous of a third term. However, Santos believed that time was too short to carry out the steps remaining to achieve reelection. He even doubted that Uribe could mobilize the 7.2 million votes necessary for the referendum to be valid.

Candidate Santos

14. (C) If Uribe steps aside, Santos was certain he could win the presidency in two rounds, though much depended on how the other candidates might align before and after the first round. He thought it unlikely that Conservative Party (PC) hopeful Noemi Sanin would join his campaign given their poor relationship. The other PC pre-candidate, Andres Felipe Arias, is embroiled in a scandal over agricultural subsidies; Santos thought the young politician would be patient and wait for a future opportunity to make his run. Santos detailed the Left's dilemma: the Liberal Party (LP) can ally with fellow anti-reelection parties Democratic Alternative Pole (PDA) or Radical Change (CR), but not both given their contrary political leanings. Santos discounted independent candidate Sergio Fajardo altogether, saying that his campaign had stagnated. While the May 2010 elections were "an eternity" away in political terms, Santos imagined a scenario where he and Sanin finish in the top two, making the final round a contest against right-leaning candidates.

Colombia Regional Relations

15. (C) Santos said he was disappointed at the Foreign Ministry's handling of the rapprochement with Ecuador. The fact that a judge in Ecuador was seeking his extradition, along with Chief of Defense Freddy Padilla and Director of the Colombian National Police Oscar Naranjo, for the March 2008 attack on Raul Reyes' Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) camp in Ecuador was a problem for the Colombian State, he said. Santos said the Foreign Ministry was too focused on restoring relations with Ecuador and was not doing enough to defend the high-ranking Colombian officials involved in the operation.

16. (C) He similarly criticized the Foreign Ministry for not doing more to isolate Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez internationally. He said the U.S.-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA), which he initiated as Minister of Defense, was a strategic advance for Colombia to deter the threat from Venezuela.

BROWNFIELD

=====CABLE ENDS=====